

“Beyond Pathologies” in New Product Development

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Abstract

The tendency to develop new products and services beyond what is required by market, users, plans, and the resources in the organization ranks at top 10 of risks of new product development (NPD) failures. However, scholars and practitioners devoted limited attention to it. Many terms are used to outline the excesses in product development such as Feature Creep, Feature Fatigue, Overdesign, Overspecification, Over-requirement, Scope Creep, and Gold-Plating among the others.

Excessive development configures in various forms that can be grouped inside the name of “Beyond Pathologies” (BPs). Nevertheless, a terminological and conceptual confusion exist inside the realm of BPs together with a lack of theoretical development, and a limited investigation of the causes, the drivers, and the performance effects of BPs.

The present paper presents an overview of the of BPs, the evolution of the concept over time, together with a synthesis of findings emerged from the available empirical studies about BPs on the NPD projects. In doing so, a theoretical and conceptual development of BPs is proposed to clarify and advance such a multifaced phenomenon. BPs are also explored inside the most common NPD frameworks, namely Stage-Gate and Agile.

KEYWORDS: Feature Creep; Feature Fatigue; Overdesign; Overspecification; Scope Creep; Overscoping; Gold-Plating; Bells-and-whistles; New Product Development; NPD; Agile; Stage-Gate